Learning Community Assessment:
Building Upon Existing Tools to Better Inform Future Practice

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9:50 AM – 10:40 AM
Senate Chamber
Ohio Union
Learning Objectives

• Participants will be able to articulate the evolution of an assessment loop through the lens of the Office of Residence Life at Ohio State

• Participants will gain a practical understanding of how to adapt current assessment tools to changing needs

• Participants will have the opportunity to consider their own barriers to successful assessment efforts and ways to overcome these barriers

• Participants will be prepared to begin conversations about the necessary assessment tools for their individual needs
Your Presenters: Who Are We?
The Audience: Who Are You?
The Student Life Charge

http://cssl.osu.edu/organizational-effectiveness/model/
The Process of Developing Activities and Outcomes

Major Activities and Expected Outcomes for University Residences

Major Activity 1:  
**Create Community**

Expected Outcomes:
As a result of the activities and services provided by University Residences, residents will:

1) Engage with the university community
2) Understand the value of global perspectives
Major Activities and Expected Outcomes for University Residences

Major Activity 2:
Enhance Learning and Development

Expected Outcomes:
As a result of the activities and services provided by University Residences, residents will:
1) Form meaningful connections to contextualize their learning
2) Apply principles and ideas from their university experience to their lives
Major Activities and Expected Outcomes for University Residences

Major Activity 3: Help Students Succeed

Expected Outcomes:
As a result of the activities and services provided by University Residences, residents will:

1) Develop the ability to achieve academic and personal success
2) Understand the value of wellness in connection with their success
The Theoretical Framework

Six Metaphors for the Role of the Residence Hall

- Climate
- Community
- Classroom
- Catalyst
- Consumable
- Culture

Major Activities

- Create Community
- Enhance Learning & Development
- Help Students Succeed

Student Experience in Residence Halls

Adapted from Six Metaphors for the Assessment of the Residential Experience Model from Schroeder and Mable’s (1994) benchmark book Realizing the Educational Potential of Residence Halls
What We Learned About LC Students

Learning Communities at Ohio State have a big impact on the experience of students’:

• Campus Involvement
• Cultural Understanding
• Academic Growth
• Intellectual Growth
• Personal Growth
• Knowledge of Campus Resources
• Development of Life Skills
• Development of Social Skills
• Perception of Interactions with Staff
The Learning Community Advantage

Compared with their peers who were not a part of a Learning Community at Ohio State, students in a Learning Community were more likely to report that their residence hall experience had a positive influence upon:

- Participation in a co-curricular organization or activity
- Ability to respectfully disagree with others
- Ask for academic help
- Balance academics and social life
- Explore new learning experiences
- Feel connected to OSU
- Give thought to career goals and life after graduation
### Example of Data Comparing Learning Community Students

#### Social Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Honors</th>
<th>LC</th>
<th>None of these</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reaching out to new people and/or making friends</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>4.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacting with other students living in my residence hall/complex</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>4.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking about things I learn in class in my residence hall/complex</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking about world events with others</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of who I am as a person</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Means based on 6-point scale: 1 – Not at all; 2 – Very Little; 3 – Little; 4 – Moderately; 5 – Significantly; 6 – Completely)

From 2011 H.O.M.E. Survey
Reliability Test for HOME Subscales

The Center for the Study of Student Life calculated a measure of internal consistency, a reliability coefficient, among relevant sub-scales of items in the HOME 2012 survey using Cronbach’s $\alpha$. In social science, a Cronbach’s $\alpha$ of .70 is generally considered “acceptable”. These scores indicate that the series of questions under each sub-scale are reliably measuring the same construct.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Scale</th>
<th>Cronbach’s $\alpha$</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus Involvement Sub-Scale</td>
<td>.878</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Understanding Sub-Scale</td>
<td>.931</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Growth Sub-Scale</td>
<td>.915</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intellectual Growth Sub-Scale</td>
<td>.948</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunity Seeking Sub-Scale</td>
<td>.906</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Growth Sub-Scale</td>
<td>.906</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life Skills Sub-Scale</td>
<td>.918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Skills Sub-Scale</td>
<td>.933</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Learning Communities at Ohio State

A Brief Overview
Learning Community Overview

15 Residential Learning Communities Operated between Residence Life and Academic Partners:

- Examples include Engineering, John Glenn School of Public Affairs, Nursing, and Pharmacy
- Approximately 1200 students involved yearly
- Students clustered in halls and coursework based upon major and/or interest areas
- Daily operations occur as a result of partnerships between hall staff and academic departments
Learning Community Focus

- Quality vs. Quantity
- Gain/strengthen academic partnerships
- Hall staff assessing the needs of their program for daily activities
- Sharing information with current academic partners and prospective students
Connecting Learning Community Needs with the HOME Survey
Building Upon the HOME Survey
Barriers to Success

- Sample Sizes
- Input of Academic Contacts and Hall Staff
- Satisfaction vs. Learning Outcomes
- Survey Fatigue
- Managing Survey Length
- Time
What Kind of Barriers Do You Find?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample Sizes</td>
<td>Targeted Marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Input of Academic Contacts</td>
<td>Shared Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction vs. LOs</td>
<td>Strike a Balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Fatigue</td>
<td>Combine with HOME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage Survey Length</td>
<td>Develop Long-term Assessment Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding Time</td>
<td>If you figure this out, let us know!</td>
</tr>
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Highlights of Results

• 265 Learning Community Participants
• Consistent with 2011 Findings the Learning Community Students identified higher levels of growth than their non-LC and Honors peers in every question we asked (of approximately 40)
• Additional questions were asked to Learning Community students (some common to all LCs and some by individual program) to gain additional information and results varied by program
• Note for the following results: Most LCs had 15-25 participants, some as high as 40, some as low as 6
Highlights of Results, continued:

• For overall questions, mean scores for individual LCs varied by as much as 2 points (6 point scale) indicating significant variance in the student experience (From a 3.04 to a 5.04)
• Learning Communities with Strong Academic Partnerships generally scored higher than those that are based upon student interest (Afrikan American Learning Community was an exception to this, scoring comparably)
Of all of the activities offered to students in their Learning Communities, most found the following activities most helpful:

- Social Programming
- In-Hall Academic Advising
- Applying for Major/Career Planning

Activities students wanted to see more of included:

- Study Abroad
- Alternative Break Trips
Informing the Future

• Programs and Activity Feedback for Individual Learning Communities
• Identify programs needing additional resources
• Marketing successes for students recruitment
• Sharing data to support additional academic partnerships
• Identifying areas for further assessment
And Repeat…

Questions?

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